

HB360

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE SURFACE WATER ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING PROGRAM; AND
PROVIDING PROGRAM DUTIES.**

- (1) The Montana bureau of mines and geology shall develop and implement a surface water assessment and monitoring program for the purpose of collecting and compiling surface water information. The bureau shall gather data, compile existing information, conduct field studies, and prepare a detailed hydrogeologic assessment report for each subbasin. The bureau shall develop a monitoring plan and a hydrogeologic model for each subbasin for which a report is prepared.
- (2) There is a steering committee consisting of:
 - a) an employee of each of the following state agencies appointed by the head of the respective state agency:
 1. DNRC
 2. DEQ
 3. MDA
 4. MSL, NRIS
 5. at least one representative of tribal governments in Montana, appointed by the Governor.
 - b) The committee may include representatives of the following agencies and units of government with expertise or management responsibility related to surface water:
 1. the Legislative Services Division;
 2. the Board of Oil and Gas Conservation;
 3. the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology;
 4. a Soil and Water Conservation District;
 5. a unit of the Montana University System, other than the MBMG, appointed by the Board of Regents of Higher Education;
 6. a county government, appointed by an organization of Montana counties;
 7. a city, town, or city-county government, appointed by an organization of Montana cities and towns;
 8. each principal federal agency that has responsibility for surface water protection, management, or research, appointed by the Montana head of the respective federal agency.
 - c) The committee may include one representative of each of the following organizations and groups, appointed by the Governor, to serve as ex officio members:
 1. agricultural water users;
 2. industrial water users;
 3. a conservation or ecological protection organization; and
 4. the development community.
- (3) The steering committee shall prioritize subbasins for investigation based on current and anticipated growth of agriculture, industry, housing, and commercial activity. Permit applications for the development of surface water or ground water and the timing of the adjudication of water rights may be taken into account when prioritizing subbasins.
- (4) The steering committee shall elect a presiding officer from its voting members.
- (5) The Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology shall provide staff support to the steering committee.

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